

PENGUIN EDUCATION SPECIALS

# STATE SCHOOL

R.F.MACKENZIE



**When he became headmaster of a secondary modern school in the Scottish coalfields, R.F. Mackenzie found himself in charge of children whose lives promised to become as derelict as their surroundings - unhappy, delinquent, their futures blocked by a joyless and, to them, impossible tradition of academic education.**

This anthology of extracts from his writings describes his fight to provide them with an education which was both imaginative and relevant. Trips in the Scottish countryside, which were the children's first experience of independence and of the beauty of the land they lived in, convinced him that the school should acquire a permanent base in the Highlands, an ambition which thrust him into a long and bitter struggle with an officialdom which prized narrow restrictions more than such dreams. There were other dreams, too, and other defeats: staff who oppressed his ideal of a school free from authoritarian modes of discipline, delinquent children who tried, unsuccessfully, to keep out of trouble. But these pages speak of anything but defeat: they describe the authentic *feel* of the experience which education should provide, especially for the underprivileged, and demonstrate convincingly how good the victory will be when it is, finally, won.

'An excellent book that should be read by all who are interested in education' *Parent-Teacher*

'Here is the record of a noble attempt at child-centred, relevant education frustrated by the well-meaning but Calvinistic orthodoxy of the Scottish educational establishment' *New Scientist*

R.F. Mackenzie is now headmaster of Summerhill comprehensive school in Aberdeen.

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